



**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 30 September 2010  
**DIRECTORATE:** Planning and Regeneration  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Susan Bridge

**N/2010/0301:** 80 residential units with associated garages, roads and sewers.  
Land off South Meadow Road, Northampton,

**WARD:** West Hunsbury

**APPLICANT:** Taylor Wimpey East Midlands Ltd  
**AGENT:** None

**REFERRED BY:** Head of Planning  
**REASON:** Major Development

**DEPARTURE:** Yes

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**APPLICATION FOR CONSULTATION BY WNDC:**

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 **No objections** subject to the following issues being taken into account -

- WNDC must be satisfied in consultation with the Highway Authority that the road network of the existing St Crispins estate is sufficient to cope with the increased demand from the proposed development.
- Any permission must be subject to a Section 106 agreement to secure 35% affordable housing, with a mix of house types which is acceptable to the Borough Council Housing Strategy Section.
- Any permission must be subject to a condition setting out a strategy for dealing with unexpected contamination in line with the advice of the Council's Public Protection service.
- Any permission must be subject to conditions requiring the retention and physical protection of any trees which are either protected by way of inclusion within a TPO or are assessed as worthy of retention (Category A, B & C of BS 5837:2005).

## **2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This is a full application for the erection of 80 residential units on a greenfield site adjacent to the St Crispin's development. The site forms part of the Upton Lodge site for which the WNDC Committee resolved to grant outline planning permission (ref S/2006/1654/W) in November 2008, subject to a legal agreement.
- 2.2 The Borough Council Planning Committee considered the consultation re the Upton Lodge application at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008, when it resolved to raise significant objections to the application in that significant issues remained outstanding and unresolved, which would have a marked impact on the success of the new community if not appropriately addressed at the outline stage.
- 2.3 Members will recall that the current application was considered by the Planning Committee on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2010, when the Committee resolved to make a holding objection to WNDC, subject to the resolution of the following issues –
- The loss of mature trees / hedgerow adjacent to the established bridleway in the South East corner of the site would adversely affect the setting of this bridleway to the detriment of its users. Retention of this area may represent an opportunity to off set the loss of open space referred to above.
  - The proposed layout would result in a poor residential environment in part of the development; specifically the view at the end of one of the main access points to the site is dominated by boundary treatment to the detriment of the streetscene. The design of the housing layout in relation to the existing bridleways is also poor, resulting in these becoming back alleys with the potential to encourage crime and anti-social behaviour as well as diminishing the quality of their setting for legitimate users.
  - It is not acceptable for the flat proposed within the development to form part of the provision of affordable housing, as this is not representative of the overall mix of housing.
  - WNDC must be confident of the stability of the land before granting planning permission.
  - WNDC must be satisfied in consultation with the Highway Authority that the road network of the existing St Crispins estate is sufficient to cope with the increased demand from the proposed development.
  - The additional information requested by the Council's Arboricultural officer to be obtained and submitted for his further comments, which must be taken into account, prior to any decision.

- Any permission must be subject to a Section 106 agreement to secure 35% affordable housing.
- A Condition dealing with unexpected contamination must be attached to any permission in line with the advice of the Council's Public Protection service.
- Notwithstanding the above, the Committee expressed grave concerns about the access arrangements to the proposed development through the greater St Crispins development and have strong reservations about this site coming forward for development outwith the Upton Lodge / Norwood Farm development which is subject to a comprehensive masterplan.

2.4 Following the last Committee meeting, amended plans have been submitted to WDC and the Borough Council has been formally consulted on these.

2.5 These plans make the following amendments –

- The site access is moved to the north to avoid the area of open space adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, and now passes adjacent to neighbouring houses on North Meadow Road to the north.
- In the southeastern corner of the site some of the existing trees and vegetation adjacent to the bridleway is shown as being retained.
- The mix of house types has been amended by removing the flat over garage (FOG) and one 3 bedroom house and replacing these with two four bedroom houses, both of which would be affordable.
- The proposed roads have been amended to remove the right angled “kink” which would have caused the side wall of a garden to appear over-prominently in the streetscene.
- The “white land” in the eastern part of the site, is no longer indicated as being for “Future Residential Development”, the road passing through this land has been deleted and the road serving adjacent houses has now been altered to a shared private drive.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

3.1 The site comprises an area of agricultural land which slopes gently north to south down the Nene Valley. It measures some 5 ha. There is a group of trees located in the southeast corner. The eastern boundary and part of the northern boundary abut the outer western fringes of the existing St Crispin's development. To the south and west is open countryside. The western boundary runs along the Borough boundary with South Northants District. The site is designated in the Northampton Local Plan as forming part of an area of Greenspace (Policy E6), part of

a Locally Important Landscape Area (E9) and within a Skyline Conservation Policy Area (E7).

#### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 S/2006/1654/W - Outline application for development of housing (up to 1,784 dwellings), community and education facilities including a new primary school (3.8ha), employment (22,000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace), park & ride facility (1,000 car spaces) and part of a country park (7.7ha). Resolution to grant permission subject to a section 106 agreement 25/11/08 (WNDC Decision).

#### **5. PLANNING POLICY**

##### **5.1 Development Plan**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The current Development Plan comprises of the saved policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

##### **5.2 National Policies:**

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3 – Housing

PPG14 – Development on Unstable Land

##### **5.4 Northampton Borough Local Plan**

E1 – Landscape and open space

E6 – Greenspace

E7 – Skyline development

E20 – New development (design)

E40 – Crime and vandalism

H1 – Sites for major new residential development

H4 – Sites for major new residential development

H7 – Other housing development: outside primarily residential area

H8 – Other housing development: list of sites

H14 – Residential development: open space and children's play facilities

H32 – Affordable housing

##### **5.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Northamptonshire County Parking Standards SPG 2003

Affordable Housing SPG

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

#### **6. CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 **Access Officer** – Queries the absence of a disability access statement in support of the application.

WNDC's response is that "The prerequisite for a Disability Statement is not part of our Local Validation Requirements and one has not been submitted with this application."

6.2 **Arboricultural Officer** (comments following revision of access) – asserts the need to take into account, retain and physically protect any trees which are either protected by way of inclusion within a TPO or are assessed as worthy of retention (Category A, B & C of BS 5837:2005).

6.3 **Public Protection** (Environmental Health) - Officers from this section have no objection to the principle of the proposal. The site investigation report submitted with the application is considered to be satisfactory. The report indicates that, on the basis of the samples taken, no remediation work is required at the site. However it is possible that there may be areas of contamination on the site that have not been located by the site investigation. It is therefore recommended that any approval be subject to the condition below.

- **Reporting of Unexpected Contamination:** In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with current good practice, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with current good practice, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

6.4 **Housing Strategy** – The application now fits in with the requirements for affordable housing, and therefore I can now offer my support. Providing that the distribution of the affordable is consistent with plan GW080-01 Rev F and the affordable unit types are also consistent with that revision and specifically the breakdown below, unless otherwise agreed with this office.

AFFORDABLE HOUSE TYPE SCHEDULE

CODE/Ft <sup>2</sup>	TYPE	Person's	TOTAL
H681	2 BED HOUSE	3	- 15
H883	3 BED HOUSE	5	- 7
H883V	3 BED HOUSE	5	- 4
H1245	4 BED HOUSE	6	- 1
H1099	4 BED HOUSE	6	- 1
			- 28

## 7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The main issues to consider in respect of this application are as follows – policy considerations, Impact on ecology / trees, impact on adjoining land and occupiers, the layout and design of the site and the suitability of the site for construction (including solifluction issues).

### **Policy Considerations.**

- 7.2 The site is designated in the Local Plan as Greenspace (Policy E6), A Locally Important Landscape Area (E9) and an Area of Skyline Conservation Policy (E7).
- 7.3 Policy E6 states that “in Greenspace areas planning permission will only be granted where the proposed development would not unacceptably prejudice the function of the areas as listed and identified in appendix 2.” This site is defined in Appendix 2 as being a site which “defines the extent and protects the setting of built up areas” The Plan goes on to explain the function of such sites as follows “These are sites on the edge of the built up area where retention of open space is proposed in order to maintain both the character and setting of existing villages and resist the outward expansion of the built up area.”
- 7.4 Policy E1 states “planning permission will not be granted for development which by reason of its siting, design and layout is likely to be detrimental to the character and structure of the landscape.
- 7.5 This is backed by Policy E9 which states that “when considering, in the context of policy E1, the impact of proposed development upon the landscape, special importance will be attached to its effect upon the character.... of the locally important landscape areas”
- 7.6 Appendix 28 of the Local Plan gives greater detail as to each of the Locally Important Landscape Areas. In this case the area referred to is the St Crispins Hospital Grounds, which are considered an important part of the views to the South and West of the Town.
- 7.7 However, the site is included within the area of the outline planning application for the site known as Upton Lodge (ref S/2006/1654/W). This has been considered by WDC which have resolved to grant outline planning permission, subject to a Section 106 agreement.
- 7.8 In light of this, although the use of this site for development is contrary to policy of the Local Plan it is considered that the principle of its development is established.
- 7.9 In addition, in respect of Policy E6 it is considered that the reasoning for maintaining the land as defining the extent of the urban areas has now been overtaken by the resolution to grant outline planning permission for an area including both this site and land to the west, which would mean that this site would no longer represent the edge of the town. A new

edge to the town and separation between Northampton and Harpole would be created by the country park proposed within the Upton Lodge proposal, to the west of this site.

- 7.10 As regards Policy E9 (the impact on the important landscape areas), the proposed dwellings are two or three storeys in height and are on the slope of the valley below and to the west of the key visual assets of the St Crispin's site, particularly the clock tower. Therefore, distant views of these important features would not be disrupted.

### **Impact on Trees**

- 7.11 The Arboricultural Officer has indicated the scheme is now acceptable subject to all trees which are worthy of retention being retained.
- 7.12 The originally submitted plans showed the removal of an area of trees and other vegetation in the southeast corner of the site. This formed part of the holding objection made by the Borough Council in June as this loss was not considered acceptable. Amendments have been made to the scheme for the retention of some vegetation in this area. In conjunction with the fact that the access road would no longer cross the adjacent open space, as discussed below, the impact of the development on the bridleway is considered to have been adequately reduced and is now considered acceptable.

### **Impact on adjoining land and occupiers**

- 7.13 Given the separation of the site from adjoining areas of land previously developed for residential use by areas of existing and proposed open space, it is not considered that any adverse impact on adjoining occupiers would result from the layout of the estate.
- 7.14 Access to the development was initially proposed to be by means of a new access road crossing what is currently an area of public open space. Whilst the impact on adjacent residents was considered, on balance, to be acceptable, amendments have now been made to the scheme which relocate this vehicular access, thereby maintaining the integrity of the public open space.
- 7.15 The vehicular access is now proposed to be at the northern end of the site, thereby reducing what was previously proposed as an area of open space within the site. Whilst this would increase the impact on adjoining residents within North Meadow Road, immediately to the north, it is considered that the separation of 12m between the nearest house within this neighbouring development and the proposed road would not result in any unacceptable impact.

### **Suitability of the site's ground conditions for construction.**

7.16 Objections received by WNDC have raised concerns as to the stability of the land and its suitability for building, citing problems in the early 1980s at sites within East Hunsbury due to land slippage (Solifluction).

7.17 This issue is referred to in the Geo-Environmental Assessment submitted with the application. This concludes as follows –

*“Based on the results, it is considered that the three slopes ... may be regarded as stable.*

*“It is recommended that further advice must be sought if there is any further excavation/cuffing on the proposed slope especially at the toe of the slopes or whether additional loading is to be placed on the slopes/crest or whether any further steepening of the slopes is planned.*

*“It must be noted the above recommendations are given based on the current site layout and levels detailed in the drawing shown in Figure 12. Even a small change (≈0.5m) in levels may have a significant effect on slope stability, and a further assessment may therefore be required.”*

7.18 Following objections made to WNDC on the grounds of land instability, further comments were received by WNDC from the developer on this issue, which conclude that “The ground conditions on the TW site are considered to be significantly different to those encountered in the vicinity of the Upton Lodge area in that soliflucted materials have not been identified. Also the site is located above the ‘negligible instability risk’ area as identified by Halcrow. In the absence of soliflucted materials, shallower slope gradients and lower groundwater conditions, it is considered that the slope instability concerns raised by DAG are not applicable to the TW site.”

7.19 On this basis it is considered that the issue of land slippage has been adequately dealt with. However, given the apparently low tolerance for any variation it is recommended that WNDC is advised to bear this in mind when considering any variations to the scheme.

### **Layout and design of the site.**

7.20 The proposal includes 16 x 3 bed, 29 x 4 bed and 7 x 5 bed market houses, 10 x 2 bed, 6 x 3 bed and 2 x 4 bed social rented houses, and 5 x 2 bed and 4 x 3 bed intermediate affordable houses. This differs from the mix of units previously proposed, following on from comments from the Council's Housing Strategy service, in that a single flat and a three bed house have been removed from the scheme, to be replaced two four bedroom houses. The proposed mix and layout of units is now considered acceptable.

7.21 The houses proposed are broadly similar in design to houses previously approved and constructed within the St Crispin's site to the north and



east. The house types proposed comprise a mix of two, two and a half, and three storey detached, semi detached and short rows of terraced units. The layout and massing proposed would preserve the important long distance views of the clock towers, as discussed above.

- 7.22 The layout and urban design of the proposed development is also considered generally acceptable, with spaces between buildings and garden areas being of adequate size.
- 7.23 Some concerns in this regard were nonetheless raised in the Borough Council's holding response to the previously proposed scheme. The amendments now received do address these issues as a result in part to the amended access. Overall, the layout and streetscene is now considered to be acceptable.
- 7.24 Whilst the access to the site has been adjusted, this would still result in all traffic passing through the existing St Crispin's development. A revised Transport Statement and Travel Plan was submitted in September 2010 and at the time of writing this report had only been with the Highway Authority for a few days, meaning that no response had been received. Furthermore, WNDK indicate that it has not yet had confirmation from the Highway Authority that access through the existing St Crispin Development is acceptable. The Highway Authority response on these points will be reported to Committee by means of the Addendum.
- 7.25 WNDK must therefore be satisfied, in consultation with the Highway Authority, that the road network of the existing estate is sufficient to cope with the increased demand arising from the proposed development.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 It is considered that whilst the proposed development is acceptable in principle, the issues set out in this report and as summarised at paragraph 1.1 must be fully considered and addressed before the application is determined and that the issues which were raised in the holding objection previously made to WNDK have not, at the time of writing this, been fully resolved.
- 8.2 In particular a significant question remains over the ability of the road network within the St Crispins development, as it will be on completion, to handle the additional 80 units proposed and unless this has been resolved at the time of the Committee meeting it is recommended that a further holding objection is made.

## **9. FURTHER INFORMATION**

- 9.1 As a separate matter to the above application, discussions have taken place between the Borough Council officers and representatives of Taylor Wimpey, the developers of the St Crispin Site and the applicants in this case.

9.2 Taylor Wimpey have indicated that they are working towards the resolution of outstanding issues and the completion of the wider site. Specifically they have made a commitment to alleviating issues of traffic congestion adjacent to the school site, by providing a new parking / drop-off bay for 8 cars close to St Luke's primary school. They also indicate that work is ongoing to secure adoption of the main access roads, which has been delayed due to defects in the sewers. Additionally, discussions are progressing regarding the delivery of the additional access to the wider St Crispins site between Berrywood Road and Kent Road.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 Application file N/2010/0310.

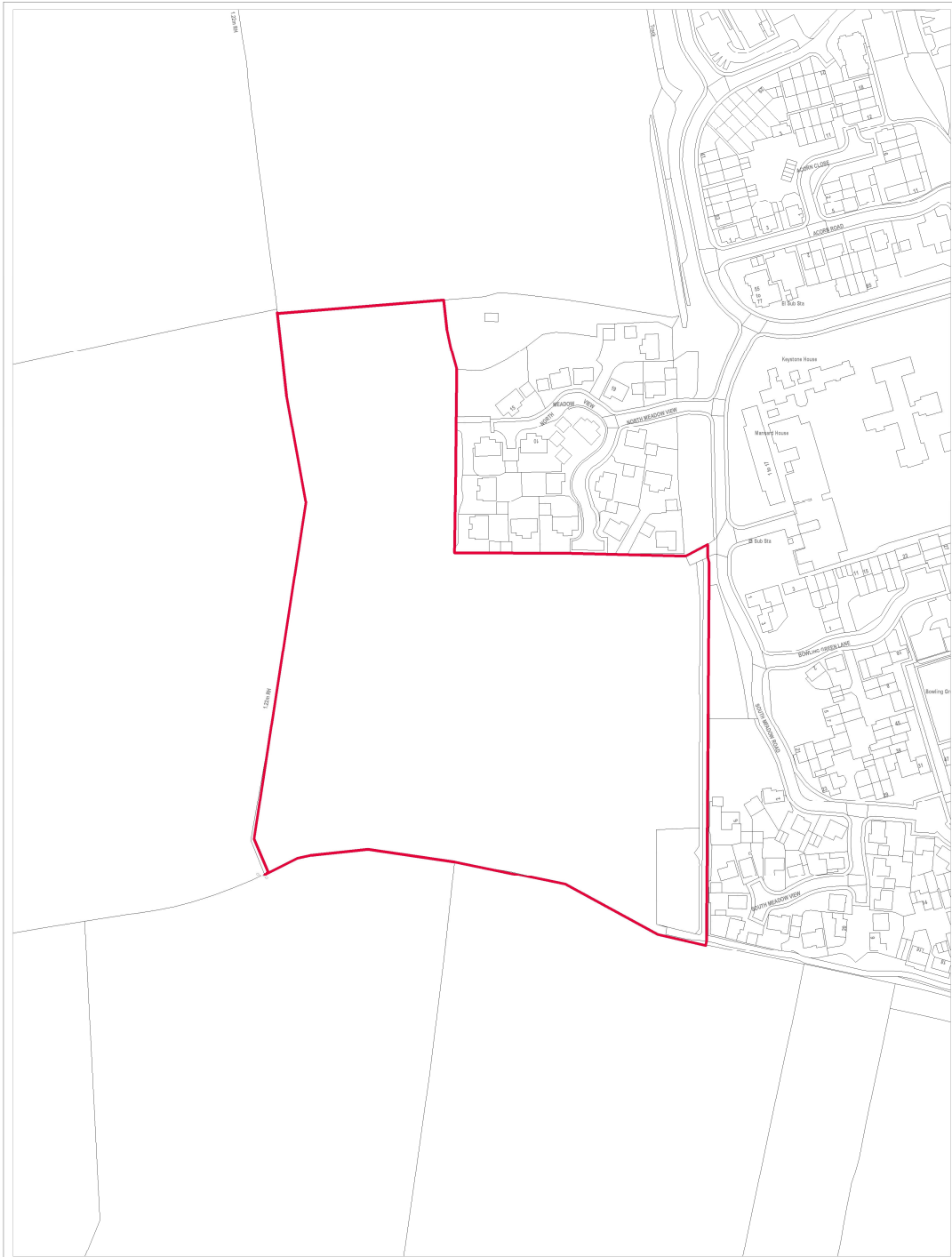
## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None.

## **12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.

<b>Position:</b>	<b>Name/Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Author:</b>	Andrew Holden	13/09/2010
<b>Development Control Manager Agreed:</b>	Gareth Jones	16/09/2010



Name: **Planning**  
 Date: **20th May 2010**  
 Scale: **1:1250**  
 Dept: **Planning**  
 Project: **Location Plan**

Title

## Land off South Meadow Road

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